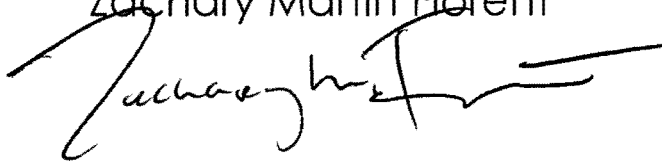


The Human Faustus Project

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

Zachary Martin Florent



Thesis Advisor

Dr. Michael O'Hara



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INTRODUCTION

The Human Faustus Project is a play that asks questions, as are the play's two main sources of inspiration: The Human Genome Project and the legend of Dr. Faust. Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* came at a time when humanity was on the brink of scientific revolution. Suddenly man had the capability to understand the mysteries of universe, knowledge that was once reserved for the Creator alone was now common and widespread. Today, with the successful completion of the Human Genome Project, we have for the first time ever a map of mankind. We have the cookbook of life and already, we have begun to tamper with the ingredients. The question we pose with our play, the question Marlowe posed with his, the question Dr. Faust always demands is 'How far are we willing to go?' You decide.

SUMMARY

Dr. John Faust's tenure has just been revoked. Apparently the university felt that the data in his controversial article had been "cooked" and now he has until the end of the semester to vacate his office. An emotional wreck, he is left alone to pack up his life's work. From out of the blue, a mysterious man dressed as a magician appears and offers John a proposal: "knowledge, new insights, immense powers. Magic at your fingertips. Answers to your questions. Unlimited access to the building blocks of life. The ability to cure disease – the means to do those great and wonderful things..." In exchange, John must promise to use the knowledge to help the world and give the mysterious man his soul. No problem, after all, there's no such thing as a soul, right?

Suddenly, Dr. Faust finds himself out of academic exile and onto the cover of Time Magazine, being hailed as the "Savior of Mankind." Each day brings a new discovery and with each new cure found, Dr. Faust only thirsts for more. Everything is going great for the world's new savior until one of his patients unexpectedly dies. In the blink of an eye, the famous Dr. Faust is forced underground and from there he must continue to do his work in secret. But how long can Dr. Faust keep going? How many more lives must be lost? Where will he draw the line? Only the magician knows, but he prefers ask the questions.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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The Human Faustus Project is a play that was developed collaboratively by fifteen students and one professor as part of a seminar at the Virginia Ball Center for Creative Inquiry during the Spring Semester of 2006. On May 3, 2006, it premiered at the Indiana Repertory Theatre in Indianapolis and was performed as a staged reading. As part of its 2007-2008 production season, the Department of Theatre and Dance at Ball State University will fully produce this play and submit it as a full entry to the American College Theatre Festival. In addition to writing the play, students in the seminar created several documentaries and short films, composed original music, and completed a full production design to accompany the play. The original cast is as follows:

Dr. John Faust	Dustin Spence
Dr. Diane Wagner	Margaret Ruling
Mephistopheles	Ethan Mathias
Edward Forsythe	Elliot Lemberg
Sarah, Ensemble	Kate Lumpkin
Joel, Ensemble	James E. Roberts
Reporter, Ensemble	James Thompson
Bill, Ensemble	Joel Miller
Bo, Ensemble	Zack Florent
Guisewhite, Ensemble	Tara Branham
Jacob, Ensemble	Peter Corey
Richard, Ensemble	Kyle Johnson
Lydia, Ensemble	Kyle Jean Fisher

The staged reading was directed by Jennifer Blackmer and the stage managers were J.D. Ostergaard and Jon-Tyler Core. Original music composed by Ethan Mathias, scenic design by Zack Florent and lighting design by Dustin Spence. The play was written collaboratively by all of the individuals mentioned above. Special thanks to Dr. Ann Blakey, Pat Edger, Dr. Michael O'Hara, and Mark Rigney who served as consultants to the project.

For more information, go to www.bsu.edu/humanfaustus

THE HUMAN FAUSTUS PROJECT

a play

written by
JENNIFER BLACKMER
TARA BRANHAM
JON-TYLER CORE
PETER COREY
KYLE JEAN FISHER
ZACK FLORENT
KYLE JOHNSON
ELLIOT LEMBERG
KATE LUMPKIN
ETHAN MATHIAS
JOEL MILLER
J.D. OSTERGAARD
JAMES E. ROBERTS
MARGARET RULING
DUSTIN SPENCE
and JAMES THOMSON

On a screen is projected the following:

And the devil, the magician or the fortune-teller adds a hundred lies to what he has heard and the people hear and believe ninety-nine lies because of this one scrap of Truth which was heard from the heaven.

(Kitaab At-Tawheed, Chapter: 14)

Out of the darkness we hear the clicking of a man's dress shoes upon the floor. Two claps are heard. The lights come up in full up on the stage to reveal two men standing in front of dress forms. On one dress form is a lab coat. On the other is a magician's hat the cape. The actor playing Faust puts on the lab coat. The actor playing Mephistopheles dons the hat and cape.

Mephistopheles

Good evening ladies and gentleman. I'm so happy that you could join me for a night of wonder and magic. Tonight you will witness the strange, the exotic, the marvelous, the obscene. My name is Mephistopheles the Magnificent and I will be your host. Sit back, relax, and enjoy the show.

He snaps his fingers. Music. He directs the audience's attention to a trunk in the middle of the stage. The trunk has the letters TCAG printed on its sides. The magician opens the trunk to show that there is nothing inside it. He puts the lid back on the top of the trunk and makes a magical gesture. He opens the trunk and the rest of the ensemble step out one by one. The cast members set the stage for the first scene: a science lab with a table, a desk with a microscope and a large, locked cabinet. After setting the stage, the ensemble exits, leaving Faust alone onstage. He holds a stack of binders and file folders full of papers. After a moment or two of silence he hurls the books and papers across the lab. He crosses quickly to his desk and sweeps across it, knocking everything to the floor. He searches for an empty box; finding one, he starts throwing books inside, in a crude attempt at packing. He gets an idea. He moves to a locked cabinet and opens it quickly with his keys. He momentarily surveys the samples inside, and then searches for something heavy. He winds up with the chair as if to smash the samples inside ... just before contact, he stops. He throws the chair to the floor.

After a moment or two he pulls himself together and moves back to his desk. He starts throwing stuff into the box again. Diane Wagner enters.

Wagner

How did it go?

Faust looks at her. She surveys the damage to the room.

Wagner

Well, it either went poorly, or you're doing some extensive spring cleaning.

Faust

I have until the end of the month.

Wagner

I'm so sorry, John. At least they let you finish the semester.

Faust

You think I'm going to stay?

Wagner

What about your students?

Faust

They don't need me anymore. It'd be better for them anyway. They wouldn't have to worry about faulty information on their tests.

Wagner

You're over-exaggerating John.

Faust

You've never been accused of falsifying information, and you tell me I'm over-exaggerating? Wait until you've had your name defamed by the entire university. Or stood there, in front of the trustees, and listened as they stripped away everything you've worked for. Then, and only then, Diane, can you tell me I'm over-exaggerating because until that happens, all of it happens, you don't know. You can't know.

Wagner

I didn't mean to offend you.

Faust

(beat) I know. I'm sorry.

Wagner

I have the keys to a few more labs if you need to blow off some steam.

Faust

Thanks for the offer, but I think I've done enough damage.

Wagner

What are you going to do?

Faust

I was thinking about applying at McDonald's. I could be a fry cook.

Wagner

Don't be ridiculous. You could be a manager.

Faust

At least I'm not over-exaggerating.

Wagner

've known you a long time John. This will all blow over. You'll bounce back.

Faust laughs.

Faust

This is academic exile, Diane. You don't bounce back from this.

Pause.

Faust

We checked the figures. Didn't we check the figures?

Wagner

We double-checked them.

Faust

The university needed a scapegoat.

Wagner

Don't forget about me. I was censured, too.

Faust

Yes, but you don't have to go apply at McDonald's. (beat) This is probably for the best. I don't know how to apply my ideas practically. When I try to make what I see in my head real, it all falls apart.

Wagner

John. You're being ridiculous again.

Faust

They don't support me Diane. They won't support me. I take too many risks. You know, if the higher-ups would get off their pedestals and consider for a moment what we could do with this knowledge, we'd change the face of modern science. We could cure disease and wipe out hunger. Put the university on the map. But they're too caught up in their bullshit and petty politics to see the greater good.

Wagner

Berating the trustees isn't going to get you anywhere. It's not going to get your job back. (beat) I'm hungry. You want something to eat?

Faust

I could use a burger. My arteries haven't taken a beating today.

Wagner

All right. You stay here. When I get back, we'll discuss your options.

Faust

Would you like fries with that?

Wagner

Your other options.

Wagner smiles briefly.

Wagner

I'm going to lock you in.

Faust

Thanks Mom.

Wagner exits. Faust looks around the lab, then starts leafing through one of the binders. Something catches his eye, and he reads with interest. He doesn't see Mephistopheles approach.

Mephistopheles

Hi, John.

Faust

(startled) Who are you? How did you get in here?

Mephistopheles

What are you doing?

Faust

What does it look like? Can I help you?

He tosses the binder into the box.

Mephistopheles

The trustees said you could finish the semester.

Faust

Yeah, well, I know when I'm not wanted. How did you know I was /fired?

Mephistopheles

I have my sources. They kicked your ass, didn't they?

Faust

My tenure was revoked. The academic equivalent of a good ass-kicking, I guess.

Mephistopheles

You're a popular man Dr. Faust. More popular than you might think.

Faust

Really.

Mephistopheles

Sure. You're driven. Ambitious. You could do great things. Wonderful things.

Faust

Who are you?

Mephistopheles

Who I am isn't important. What I have to offer is.

Faust

I don't want whatever it is you—

Mephistopheles

Why did they revoke your tenure?

Faust

I told them I'd solve the vector problem. I told them I'd publish. I couldn't figure it out.

Mephistopheles

So you cooked the data.

Faust

That's a lie!

Mephistopheles

C'mon, John ...

Faust

I didn't. I swear. It doesn't matter. They didn't believe me either.

Mephistopheles

The truth is an elusive creature, isn't she?

Faust

Something is either true, or it isn't. That's science. There are no grey areas. We rely on empirical data to confirm or refute our observations.

Mephistopheles

That's just what the trustees did.

Faust

Who the hell are you? What do you want?

Mephistopheles

What if you could keep working? What if you could achieve all of these things that haunt you? Would you?

Faust

Absolutely.

Mephistopheles

Let's say you had knowledge, resources, funding, means of support. What would you do, Dr. Faust?

Faust

Great things. Wonderful things.

Mephistopheles

How far are you willing to go?

Faust

As far as I can.

Mephistopheles

Good.

Mephistopheles snaps his fingers. Lights change in the lab, and we see a projection montage, filled with images of happy families, double helixes, babies developing in the womb, etc.

As you know, doctor, we now possess the map, the intricate secrets of the human genome. A narrative of the journey of human beings through time. An incredibly detailed blueprint for building every human cell. New insights that offer immense new powers to treat, prevent and cure disease. This is a unique moment in human history, John. We have the book. What we need is the right man to read it.

Pause. The projection images freezes.

Are you that man?

Faust

Do you really need to ask that question?

Mephistopheles

It's a formality.

Faust

It's all I ever wanted to do.

Mephistopheles

Then I have a proposition for you. A wager, if you will. I will give you everything you desire: knowledge, new insights, immense powers. Magic at your fingertips. Answers to your questions. Unlimited access to the building blocks of life. The ability to cure disease – the means to do those great and wonderful things that you know you can do. In return, you need do only one thing.

Faust

What's that?

Mephistopheles

Use the knowledge I give you to help the world.

Faust

You're kidding, right?

Mephistopheles

No, I never kid.

Faust

Well, what else would I do?

Mephistopheles

You'd be surprised.

Faust

I'm a geneticist because I want to figure out what makes us human. Find out why we are the way we are. If I could figure that out, I could help the world.

Mephistopheles

Sounds like you're already off to a good start.

Faust

What if I fail?

Mephistopheles

You won't.

Faust

You said this was a proposition. I must lose something. It's only a wager if both parties have things at stake. Things they could lose.

Mephistopheles

I get your soul.

Faust

My soul? That's preposterous. I don't believe in a soul.

Mephistopheles

Then this, doctor, should be the easiest wager you've ever made.

Faust thinks for a moment.

Mephistopheles

What do you have to lose? Nothing. You're getting something you've always wanted, and you don't have to give back anything in return. How could you say no?

Faust

It sounds too good to be true.

Mephistopheles

Always the skeptic. I'll need you to sign a few things. Our legal department requires it.

Mephistopheles hands Faust a file of documents and a pen. He tests the pen.

Faust

This pen is out of ink.

Mephistopheles

Sorry. That always happens.

He pats his coat, as if looking for more ink.

Faust

I have several ...

Mephistopheles

No, no. I've got it.

Mephistopheles picks up one of the test tube trays with blood samples. He reads several labels, chooses one, then dips the pen into it, pulling back the arm to fill it. He pulls it out and wipes it off with a long colorful handkerchief from his pocket. He hands it to Faust.

Mephistopheles

Here you are.

Faust pauses for a moment and looks at Mephistopheles.

Second thoughts?

Faust

Yes, actually.

Mephistopheles

You desire knowledge, right?

Faust

Of course.

Mephistopheles

And ability.

Faust

Yes.

Mephistopheles

To change the world. To do great and wonderful things.

Faust

Absolutely.

Mephistopheles

How far are you willing to go?

Faust looks at him.

You have no soul. You said so yourself. You have nothing to lose, John. Win-win.

Faust signs.

Mephistopheles

Initial here. And here. Thank you.

He separates the triplicate form and gives a copy to Faust. After rummaging in his pocket, he produces a card.

When you're ready, report to this address.

Mephistopheles starts to exit.

Faust

Wait. What do I do now?

Mephistopheles

You'll figure it out. See you soon.

Mephistopheles passes Wagner, on her way back with food..

Mephistopheles

Good evening, Dr. Wagner.

Wagner

Hello.

Mephistopheles exits. Wagner turns to Faust.

Wagner

Who was that?

Blackout. On the projection we see the following. The voice over is accompanied by images of Forsythe serving in various positions within Mephisto.

Forsythe (V.O.)

Hello. I'm Edward Forsythe, CEO of Mephisto Pharmaceuticals. Here at Mephisto, we take our patients and their health very seriously. Right now, we are developing new treatments and prescription drugs for leukemia, cancer, HIV/AIDS, and Avian Bird Flu. When your doctor prescribes one of our medications, he or she is doing much more than healing you. Together, you and your physician are making an investment in the future of medicine. You're fueling new developments in research. I want to thank you, America, for bringing Mephisto Pharmaceuticals into your lives and your homes. We're here to help you.

Logo flashes: "Mephisto" Pharmaceuticals, engineering the future one patient at a time.

Lights up. Faust, Wagner and Forsythe are in Forsythe's office. Forsythe is using an elliptical machine and wearing an earpiece, enabling him to speak on the phone. A bottle of the energy drink "Super Hero" is not far from his grasp.

Forsythe

Nice we could finally meet, John.

Faust

Thank you. This is Diane Wagner. We spoke about her on the phone.

Forsythe

Oh, uh, yeah, *that* Diane. Sure. Hi.

Wagner

Hello, Mr. Forsythe.

Forsythe

Call me Edward. Hold on. I'm getting a call. (*speaks into mouthpiece*) Bo? Is that ... Great to here from ... what's that? Sure, I ...

He reaches out and grabs the can of "Super Hero". He takes a long swig.

Forsythe

This stuff, it's good. Best energy drink I've had. You tried it John?

Faust:

No, I...

Forsythe

Here. Go on. Try it. It's fantastic.

Faust does.

Faust

It's really *quite* good.

Forsythe

I knew you'd like it. I'll have my secretary send a case of it over to your, uh, house. You have a house, right? *(removes his hand)* What's that, Bo? I couldn't quite, I couldn't make it ... are you on a cell phone? No, that's not any ... there you go ... right there. Yes, that's much ... it's much better. Can ... yes, that's wonderful, but ... I'm with. Bo, I ,, I'm with John Faust and *(covers the mouthpiece)* Sorry – What's your name?

Wagner

Wagner. Diane Wagner.

Forsythe

And Diane ... yes, he's ... he's great, Bo, just great. Yeah, we just hired him. Bo, I can't just. Yes, I understand. You're ... you're breaking up again. I'll call... I'LL CALL YOU BACK! *(adjusts mouthpiece)* Christ. He's like a damn child. Wants it all, you know, NOW! *(phone begins buzzing)* How're you two?

Faust

Really anxious to get back in the lab.

Forsythe

Great. Got any ideas?

Wagner

Lots of ideas.

Forsythe *(answering the phone)*

Listen, Bo, I can't ... yes, yes, I'll talk ... it's important, right ... let me. Call me back in two minutes, Bo, two minutes!

Faust

We'd like to continue our research on viral vectors for genetic therapy. We're really close to something.

Forsythe

Close to what?

Faust

Do you want answers, Mr. Forsythe, or do you want results?

Forsythe (laughing)

You're a man after my own heart, John. You don't fuck around. Just remember, we're here to help people. Cure disease. Could you hand me that towel?

Faust

Sure.

Faust grabs a towel and hands it to Forsythe. Wagner stifles a giggle. Forsythe wipes his face with the towel.

Forsythe (*tossing the towel aside*)

Jesus, that's better. Anyway, yeah, I built this company. From the ground up. It's my love and my life. I've put blood, sweat, and tears into this place, but it's not all mine anymore. It's not for me, John. It's for everyone. Everyone who, well, needs the services we provide. It's a people's company. Does that make sense?

Faust

Perfect sense.

Forsythe

Doctors, you need anything, just, uh, let me know. I always answer my phone. Glad to have you on board.

The phone begins buzzing again.

Forsythe

Shit. I gotta take this. (*Into mouthpiece*) Bo, you sonofabitch. Really ... no, he's just ... they're leaving Bo.

Faust and Wagner begin to exit.

Forsythe (*Hand over mouthpiece*)

Glad we had this talk. We'll be in ... (*Into receiver*) Yeah, Bo, I talked ... yeah. I agree. That's big., Bo, real big.

Blackout. Mephistopheles sits on his trunk. He clicks a remote and an image appears on the screen – Paul Klee's Angelus Novus.

Mephistopheles

Angelus Novus. Paul Klee. *(As he speaks, Mephistopheles begins ripping the shape of a bird out of newspaper.)* The painting shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing up from Paradise. *(He strikes a match and sets it to the paper bird.)* It has got caught in his wings with such a violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. *(He throws the flaming paper in the air to reveal a live dove.)* This storm is what we call progress.

Lights change. Wagner and Faust are in the lab. Next to Faust are several test tube trays filled with the Mephisto logo and a biohazard symbol on the side.

Faust

DAMN!

Wagner

It's not working?

Faust

No. The virus accepts the new sequence, but once I introduce it to the host cell it goes nuts. I can't control it.

Wagner

Murine leukemia shouldn't do that.

Faust

I'm not working with murine. This is HIV.

Wagner

HIV? I thought we decided to start with murine.

Faust

Not potent enough. It won't proliferate quickly.

Wagner

Dammit John. You need to warn me when you change gears. I can't keep up. I don't think it's smart.

Faust doesn't respond.

Wagner

We need to start with something moderate.

Faust

I can't waste my time on murine.

Wagner

I've been working on it for months.

Faust

And you haven't gotten anywhere. So, like I said, I can't waste my time with it.

Wagner

Thanks for the vote of confidence.

Faust

Damn!

Wagner

HIV isn't working either.

Faust

It's just not cooperating yet.

Pause.

Wagner

We're out of plasma. I'm going down to freezer storage. Do you need anything?

Faust

No, thank you.

Wagner

Page me if you think of something.

She exits. A few moments pass. Mephistopheles enters.

Mephistopheles

What's up, doc?

Faust looks at him.

Faust

Where the hell have you been?

Mephistopheles

Around.

Faust

You said you'd help me. It's not working. I still can't do it.

Mephistopheles

Allow me.

He pushes Faust from the microscope.

Faust

The virus is unstable.

Mephistopheles

Of course it's unstable. It isn't aggressive enough.

Faust

What do you mean? This is HIV. It's pretty damned aggressive.

Mephistopheles

It's not aggressive *enough*.

He crosses to the trunk and opens it. Dry ice fog escapes as he lifts out a test tube tray with a large biohazard sign on the side.

Faust

What's that?

Mephistopheles

Ceranus virus.

Faust

You're not serious. I can't use that!

Mephistopheles

Why not?

Faust

It's deadly.

Mephistopheles

And HIV's not?

Faust

The two aren't comparable.

Mephistopheles

You're right. Ceranus can do what HIV only dreams of.

Faust

And that's why I can't put it anywhere near a human being.

Mephistopheles

Harness its power, its aggression, and use it. You may just find your answer.

Faust

It's too dangerous. I'd be putting myself at great risk! Not to mention my patients. It's out of the question.

He goes back to the microscope. Mephistopheles shrugs.

Mephistopheles

Suit yourself. I'll just leave these here. In case you change your mind.

He puts a pair of safety goggles, a gas mask and large rubber gloves next to the test tube tray on the desk. Faust watches him exit and then looks at his microscope. After a beat he looks up, crosses to the door and locks it. He puts on the rubber gloves.

Blackout. Sudden flashes of cameras. We are now at a press conference.

Forsythe

Hello. Everyone please have a seat. Thank you so much for joining us today. I am Edward Forsythe, founder and CEO of Mephisto Pharmaceuticals, the world's largest manufacturer and distributor of prescription drugs. As you know, our corporate motto is "engineering the future, one patient at a time." Keeping this in mind, I'm proud to announce what will most likely be the biggest scientific discovery of our time. I'd like to introduce Dr. John Faust, head of research and development at Mephisto.

Faust joins Forsythe at the podium.

Forsythe

Dr. Faust, ladies and gentlemen, has just developed a treatment that will cure most forms of the deadly blood cancer leukemia.

Gasps and applause.

Forsythe

Dr. Faust will explain the procedure, and take a few of your questions.

Faust

Thank you. First I'd like to introduce my—

He indicates Wagner, who halfway stands before being interrupted by Reporter #1.

Reporter

Tell us about the cure, doctor.

Faust

The procedure was derived from some cutting edge research into gene therapy--

Forsythe interrupts Faust.

Forsythe

I know this research is controversial, but it is Mephisto's position that gene therapy offers some of the surest methods to cure dreadful diseases. Right, John?

Faust

Yes. Yes it does.

Reporter #1

How does it work, doctor?

Faust

These illustrations may help. Lights, please.

The lights dim, and a series of slides illustrate the following procedure.

First, we undergo a process called gene cloning.

Murmurs from the reporters.

Now, wait. *Gene* cloning is not the same as cloning. Basically, all we're doing is isolating the desired genetic sequence and inducing it to replicate as quickly as possible. We clone several healthy genes and grow copies of them in the laboratory, using a luminescent dye to assist us in locating the appropriate gene for transfer. Once we isolate the desired gene, we splice this genetic information onto the DNA of a disabled virus.

Reporter #1

A virus?

Faust

Viruses infiltrate the bodies' major systems quickly, replacing the host cells' genetic material with their own. When we replace the virus' genetic material with the desired gene, we have an efficient way to get that new material into the cells of the patient.

Reporter #1

But isn't it dangerous?

Faust

There are some risks, yes. But we disable the virulent DNA so there's no danger to the patient.

Reporter #2

Has this procedure been successful?

Faust

Last year we completed seven laboratory trials on animals, and we have now completed the first human trial on a young girl. When she was born, her genetic workup showed a 98% probability of developing leukemia in early childhood.

Reporter #2

What virus are you using?

Faust

Uh ... a retrovirus. I assure you, it's completely safe.

Reporter #3

Is the girl healthy?

Faust

We're keeping a close eye on her, but so far there is no sign of the defective gene.

Reporter #4

Can we talk to the child's parents?

Faust

They've asked for anonymity. We will respect their wishes.

Reporter #4

Weren't you fired from your last job Dr. Faust?

Faust

No. I resigned.

Reporter #4

You resigned amid a scandal surrounding the data in one of your articles.

Faust

That was—

Mephistopheles (dressed as a reporter)

What's your favorite color, Dr. Faust?

Faust

Excuse me?

Mephistopheles

You're going to be a celebrity. The public will worship you! What are you ... sagitarius?

Laughter from the reporters.

Faust

I really couldn't tell you.

Mephistopheles

C'mon! Dr. Faust ... are you single?

Faust

I don't see how that ...

Mephistopheles

It is entirely relevant. You are the new savior of mankind.

Faust

Well ... I ...

Mephistopheles

I hear *Time Magazine* is considering you for "Person of the Year."

Faust

Really?

Mephistopheles

Really.

Faust

Well, that would certainly be an honor.

Reporter #1

What about side effects?

Faust

Excuse me?

Reporter #1

How do you know there won't be any long term effects? How do we know she won't develop the disease later in her life? How do you know she won't pass the virus on to her kids?

Forsythe whispers to Faust. Faust is caught between the two.

Faust

We ... don't.

Forsythe steps up to the podium.

Reporter #5

Doesn't gene therapy cause cancer?

Faust

That's just a theory.

Reporter #5

Right.

Faust

Would you rather she die?

Forsythe

(Quickly) Thank you, John. (To the reporters) Now, if you'll all follow me, I'll give you a quick tour of Mephisto's R&D suite. Please, no more photos at this time.

Lights change. A waiting room in the clinic.

Faust

(*glancing down*) Mr. and Mrs. Rothman. I'm Dr. Faust and this my associate Dr. Wagner.

Joel

(*Rising*) It's nice to meet you. I'm Joel. This is my wife Sarah.

They shake hands and sit around the table.

Faust

I see you're planning on having a child? Your first?

Sarah

Yes, doctor, and we're worried.

Joel

We have concerns. You see, Yom Kippur is next week.

Faust

How exciting.

Wagner

Um, John, Yom Kippur means "Day of Atonement".

Joel

It is a day set aside for repentance. You must "atone" for your sins.

Faust

I don't see what this all has to do with your child. Then again, I'm not Jewish. I don't know the customs.

Pause. Joel and Sarah look at each other. Sarah prods him forward.

Joel

I have a lot to atone for. (Beat) I used to desire men. Sexually. (pause) My wife knows. We've discussed it at length. And together, we've moved on. It's in the past.

Faust

(Beat) I understand, Mr. Rothman. But still -

Joel

We understand there's a probability that --it- is genetic.

Faust

I see.

Sarah

We want a child, Dr. Faust.

Faust

Well, yes, of course, but there's only a small probability your child would be a homosexual. Some studies point to genetic factors--

Wagner

But there are other variables.

Faust

And other studies have refuted the genetic link.

Sarah

We understand all that, Dr. Faust. We, well, we've done our homework.

Sarah pulls out an index card.

Sarah

There was something about a cascade.

Faust

A cascade effect, yes, during fetal development.

Sarah

A gene on chromosome six can cause (reading) "primary nonrandom X inactivation."

Faust

That's correct. (pause) What exactly is your request Mr. and Mrs. Rothman?

Pause

Joel

God, doctor, frowns on ... it. My feelings have put me at odds with my faith. The turmoil it has caused, within me, I wouldn't wish that on anyone.

Sarah

We want what's best for our child.

Joel

I don't want him or her to have to go through what I did.

Sarah

We need your assurance, doctors.

Joel

Your assurance our child will be normal.

Wagner

We can't give you that assurance. No one can.

Sarah

Your genetic therapy can alter a patient's genes, right?

Faust

We'd like to think so.

Joel

Then fix our baby's genes, Dr. Faust.

Wagner

Mr. Rothman, there's a good chance that your child won't have the genetic markers.

Joel

There's also a chance that he will.

Wagner

That's true.

Sarah

We're not willing to take that risk.

Wagner and Faust are silent.

Joel

Will you help us?

Faust

Mr. and Mrs. Rothman. Any treatment we could offer would be highly experimental. I couldn't guarantee any degree of success.

Sarah

But you'll try.

Pause

Mephistopheles

You have an opening next week, doctor, right before Yom Kippur.

Faust

Why don't the two of you come back and we can talk about options.

Sarah

Thank you, doctor. You have no idea how much this means to us.

Mephistopheles shows them out.

Wagner

Preventative genetic therapy. It's never really been done before.

Faust

That's incidental, Diane. We've been talking about it for years. I can do it.

Wagner

It would be controversial.

Faust

Everything's controversial until it's not controversial anymore.

Wagner

That doesn't make sense John.

Faust

Of course it does.

Wagner

We would have to classify the condition as a disease in order to get funding.

Faust

I'll talk to Forsythe.

Wagner

I don't know John. Something's just not right. We talk about whether we could, but we need to talk about whether we should.

Mephistopheles enters.

Mephistopheles

Mr. and Mrs. Rothman are in the lab giving blood samples. I've made them an appointment for Thursday. Eleven o'clock.

Pause.

I smell another breakthrough, doctor.

Blackout. On the projection screen we see a news broadcast:

Mephistopheles (as a reporter)

Scientists at Mephisto Pharmaceuticals, led by world-renowned researcher Dr. John Faust, today announced a controversial new therapy for the treatment of what has been termed "sexual deviancy syndrome" or SDS. The new treatment is the first of its kind to apply gene therapy techniques pioneered by Dr. Faust and his Mephisto team to specifically target what has been labeled the "gay" gene, or Xq28. The therapy replaces deviant codons on Xq28 with those of a healthy, heterosexual male or female. Several conclusive trials have been conducted on animals, and the company is planning to test the procedure on human volunteers later this month.

Film cuts to an interview of Faust.

Faust (on film)

It will obviously take a few years to fully understand the implications of our work. We won't know for certain whether the subjects will succumb to the effects of SDS until they reach puberty.

Mephistopheles (voice over)

Advocates within the gay community are outraged.

Film cuts to footage of protestors. A man holding a large picket sign reading "RIGHT TO IDENTITY" speaks to the camera.

Protestor

It's a crime. And they're all guilty. Not just Dr. Faust. Not just the pharmaceutical companies. But the parents. They're guilty too.

Film cuts to second protester.

Another Protestor

People have labeled this as a disease. I'm a disease. I'm abnormal. I don't believe I'm abnormal. I'm happy with myself. You can't prescribe happiness, Dr. Faust. You can't tell someone how to be happy.

Film cuts to a third protester.

Third Protestor

We live in a society that prides itself on accepting other people's differences. Where are we as a society if we can't do that anymore?

Film cuts to an interview of Forsythe.

Forsythe (on film)

The ultimate choice to go ahead with the procedure will rest in the hands of the child's parents. Only they can know what is right for their child.

Lights up on the procedure room. Faust, Mephistopheles and Wagner examine a young man sedated on the gurney.

Mephistopheles

Stephen Murphy. Male. Twenty years old. Acute lymphocytic leukemia.

Faust

Did you get the consent forms?

Mephistopheles

Yes. Everything's in order.

Faust

Okay, let's go.

Wagner

(To Mephistopheles) Scalpel.

Mephistopheles

Scalpel.

Wagner

Beginning primary incision.

Faust

Good. (Beat) Okay, turn on the camera.

Wagner

There it is.

Faust

Good.

The projection screen shows a camera moving through the patient's bloodstream.

Wagner

I wonder what he's thinking right now?

Faust

Who?

Wagner

Stephen.

Faust

Who?

Wagner

The patient.

Mephistopheles

Not much. He's asleep.

Faust

(To Mephistopheles) Would you please prepare the vector?

Mephistopheles

Whatever you say, doctor.

He crosses to the back of the lab.

Wagner

He gives me the creeps.

Faust

Come on, Diane, he's not all bad.

Wagner

You're right. He *is* kind of handsome.

Faust looks at Wagner, who is grinning.

Faust

How are we doing?

Wagner

Almost there. *(Beat)* I had to be escorted into work this morning.

Mephistopheles

More protesters?

Wagner

Today's group was larger.

Mephistopheles

Everybody's always angry about something.

Faust

(To Wagner) It's all nonsense. They're just fanatics. They don't try to understand us. We're using the resources available to better mankind. I don't see anything wrong with what we're doing.

Wagner

Maybe we don't understand them. Should we be doing these procedures? You only worry about whether or not we can. Where do we draw the line?

Faust

Does there have to be a line?

Wagner

There's always a line.

Faust

Why?

The projection image stops at the patient's pelvic bone.

Wagner

We're there.

Faust

Good. Start collecting.

Beat.

Wagner

Have you ever been to a magic show, John?

Faust

No.

Wagner

Really?

Faust

Paying money to see some lunatic play with smoke and mirrors. Why waste your energy in illusion when reality has so much to offer?

Wagner

Illusion is a necessary part of reality.

Faust

Illusion is a manipulation of reality, a bending. Instead of making things clearer, it throws us in a different direction.

Wagner

Like a prism?

Faust

A prism bends sunlight and shows us the inside. We see the light is made up of a spectrum of colors.

Wagner

Right. Reality defined by illusion.

Faust

Reality is defined by doubting illusion.

Mephistopheles

Reality *is* illusion.

Wagner and Faust look at Mephistopheles. He turns back around.

Wagner

I have the sample. Retracting the camera.

Faust

Good. Nice work.

Wagner

Everyone has to have a little faith, John. Even you. You have your faith in science.

Faust

Faith promotes blindness and ignorance, it reveals nothing. It only prevents people from desiring more. I have no faith in science, or anything else for that matter.

Wagner

When I was a little girl, my grandfather took me to see a magician. I didn't know what to expect. It was the most amazing thing ever. The best part was when my grandfather was chosen as a volunteer. I remember him stepping into this upright casket looking thing and then the next moment, he was waving to us all from the back of the auditorium.

Faust

You knew it was a trick.

Wagner

Right. But I wanted to know how it worked. I hounded my grandfather for weeks, asking him questions, trying out hypothesis after hypothesis, and no matter what, he refused to offer even a hint. He just smiled and shrugged his shoulders.

Faust

Did you ever figure it out?

Wagner

Never.

Faust

So what was the point?

Wagner

Remember what you said earlier? The secret is in the bending?

Faust

Yes.

Wagner

Knowing how the trick is performed could never be as spectacular as experiencing the trick itself. Sometimes you reach a certain point where perhaps it's best not to know.

Mephistopheles turns to Faust and Wagner. He is holding a syringe of clear liquid.

Mephistopheles

The virus is ready, John.

Lights shift. Bill enters and sits down at his piano. He begins to play a lovely solo; he does not use sheet music, but appears to be making it up as he goes along.

At the end of the song, he starts to clap for himself. As he does, he loses his breath. He gasps for air, hard. He falls off of the piano stool. Blackout.

Lights shift. A large version of the Mephisto logo descends. The M is wearing a santa hat. We are at the annual holiday part for Mephisto Pharmaceuticals. Ensemble members mingle, dance

and pass hors d'oeuvres. Forsythe enters and takes his place in front of the wreath. He raises his glass.

Forsythe

And I want to extend a special thanks to Dr. John Faust and his team in Research and Development. When people think of genetic research, they think of Mephisto, and that's because of this remarkable man. Keep up the good work John.

Applause. Faust tries his best to hide, but there is nowhere to go.

Forsythe

I promise you, Mephisto Pharmaceuticals will continue to improve the health and well-being of our patients next year and for years to come. Enjoy yourselves and Happy Holidays!

Forsythe downs his drink and cues the band.

Wagner

Good evening, John.

Faust

Diane! You look ... Respectable.

Wagner

You look ... the same. Are you having fun?

Faust

Not really.

Wagner

(pseudo-whisper) You're doing a terrible job hiding it.

Faust

Am I that transparent?

Wagner

Yes. Huddled up here in the corner. Like some wallflower. You're the star of the show!

Faust

I really can't stand these things. They make me nervous.

Wagner

There's nothing to it, John. Just mingle. If someone corners you, smile and nod. Act interested.

Faust

I've never been much of an "actor". I'm either interested or I'm not.

Wagner

Loosen up a little. You need a drink.

Faust

The only thing they're serving is that Super Hero energy drink. Have you tried it?

Wagner

Not yet.

Faust

It tastes like Lysol.

Pause.

Faust

Listen, Diane ... would you like to, um, well, you know, I thought if you weren't ... maybe ...

Mephistopheles swings by.

Mephistopheles

Greetings, one and all.

Faust

What are you doing here?

Mephistopheles

Enjoying the holiday ambiance. (*awkward pause.*) Actually, I came over to ask the young lady for a dance.

Faust

She doesn't / dance.

Wagner

I'd love to dance.

Mephistopheles

Somehow I knew you would. (*bowing low*) Madame?

Wagner takes his hand.

Wagner

(*to Faust*) Circulate. Try to enjoy yourself. And watch out, here comes the boss.

Wagner and Mephistopheles disappear onto the dance floor. Forsythe zeroes in on Faust.

Forsythe

John! My miracle man! You're not dancing?

Faust

No, I really / don't, uh, dance.

Forsythe

That's too bad, John, really too bad. You had a drink yet?

Faust

No. Unfortunately, I haven't / had a chance yet.

Forsythe waves at a man and a woman on the dance floor. They walk toward Faust and Forsythe.

Forsythe

It's incredible. Called Super Hero. You'll love it. I'll send a case over to your house. John, this is Bo and Bitsy McNamara.

Bo

Dr. Faust. I've heard a lot about you. Eddie's been talking.

Forsythe

Bo is our biggest shareholder.

Bo

Sad, but true.

Faust

Well, it's a pleasure to meet you Mr. / and Mrs. McNamara.

Bo

Call me Bo. No need for this "mister" bullshit. Right Eddie?

Bo punches Forsythe on the shoulder. Forsythe laughs as a waiter passes by. He snatches a glass of the energy drink from the tray. Forsythe takes a quick sip and rubs his shoulder. The band begins to play another song.

Forsythe

Bitsy, can I interest you in a dance?

Bitsy

Oh, Edward, you're really too much.

Forsythe (to Bo)

If I may?

Bo

By all means. Just don't fall down out there.

Forsythe takes Bitsy's hand, and they disappear on the dance floor.

Bo

I've never really been much of a dancer. Couldn't ever get my feet to move fast enough. I always looked like Frankenstein out there. (laughs) Bitsy loves it though.

Faust

I'm not a dancer either.

Bo

I'd be surprised if you were, Doc. You spend too much time in the lab. I didn't think I was ever going to meet the Savior of Mankind.

Faust

Saviors are busy.

Bo

I know. You're telling me. (laughs) I know "busy". We love these evenings out. Since the kid came along we don't have as much time, you know?

Faust

Son or daughter?

Bo

Son. Preston. He's four. (beat) So, you know, I got to thinking about this whole thing you guys do with people's DMA / and...

Faust

Do you mean DNA?

Bo

Right. (laughs) DNA.

Faust

So what about the "whole thing we do" with DNA?

Bo

Oh yeah. Well, you know, I was thinking. You make the kids healthy, right? I mean, the stuff you guys do basically ensures that they won't get some disease.

Faust

Yes. It's complicated, but yes.

Faust takes a sip of the energy drink and winces.

Bo

What else can you change in there?

Faust

I don't follow.

Bo

Physical features? Good nose, strong chin. That sort of thing?

Faust

It's all very theoretical, but yes, it's possible.

Bo

Theoretical. Right. What about hair color? Eye color. Skin tone. You could change that stuff too?

Faust

I suppose so.

The song ends. There is a smattering of applause. Faust downs the energy drink. Bo looks out to the dance floor and catches sight of Forsythe and Bitsy. Another song begins.

Bo

Just look at them dancing out there Doc. Isn't she incredible?

Faust flags a waiter. The waiter stops in front of him with a tray. Faust takes another glass of the energy drink and several hors d'oeuvres off the tray. He sets the empty glass on top of it. The waiter nods and disappears into the crowd.

Faust

She's really *quite* good.

Bo

Yeah, she is. I only want what's best for my Bitsy.

Faust

(Trying to get away) Well. If you'll excuse me.

Bo

(Quickly) Do you have any favorite movies?

Faust

(under his breath) Oh my god.

Bo

Bitsy loves *The Way We Were* and *The Sting*. You know what those two movies have in common Doc?

Faust

Enlighten me.

Bo

Robert Redford. He's in both of them.

Faust

That's great. Good for him.

Faust takes another sip of the energy drink.

Bo

Bitsy loves Robert Redford. Now, you correct me if I wrong, but you could *theoretically* make my son grow up to look like Robert Redford. Right, Doc?

Faust

I could do / what?

Bo

Do that voodoo that you do...

Faust

I assume by "voodoo" you mean gene therapy.

Bo

Yeah. And make him look like Robert Redford. A young Robert Redford.

Faust

To be completely honest, Mr. McNamara, I've been too busy curing diseases to think about the *cosmetic* applications of my work.

Bo

Look. I'm not a genius like you, Doc, I'll admit it. I'm just a very wealthy and successful businessman. I can recognize a good thing when I see it. That's why I invested in your company. I might not know how to spell DNA, but this, this is the next big thing.

Faust downs his second glass of the energy drink.

Faust

I don't think you fully understand this process well enough to judge its progress. I am the leader in the field, Mr. McNamara. I *am* gene / therapy, I ...

Bo

You're *Time's* "Person of the Year". Whoop-dee-fucking-doo. You might be winning the race, Doc, but you're certainly not the only one running it. This is *the future of your field*, and if you don't take a look at it, I guarantee you someone else will. It's the nature of the beast. Bitsy and I aren't the only ones who want their son to grow up and have a little black book the size of a fucking Bible. It's gonna happen. Another scientist will be christened a "pioneer". It can be you, or it can be someone else. The decision is yours. Doc.

Faust

Are you threatening me?

Bo

Oh please Doc. Don't embarrass yourself. (beat) You can promise us health. Why not use the same means to promise us beauty as well? Why make 'em plain, Doc, when you can make 'em perfect?

The third song ends. Bo glances out at the dance floor. Forsythe excuses himself from Bitsy.

Bo

Now if you'll excuse me, Doc, I'm going to join my wife on the dance floor and make a fool out of myself. Think it over. You're a smart kid.

Bo smiles and walks toward Bitsy, who is waiting for him on the dance floor. Mephistopheles swings by Faust with a tray of food. He's stuffing his mouth.

Mephistopheles

Great party. Huh, doc?

Lights shift.

Mephistopheles

Before the High and Far-Off Times, (*He produces two stainless steel rings from under his cape.*) came the Time of the Very Beginnings, and that was in the days when the Eldest Magician was getting things ready. (*He rubs the two rings across each other, then separates them to reveal that they are linked.*) First, he got the Earth ready; then he got the Sea ready; then he told all the Animals that they could come out and play. (*With a magical flourish, he separates the two rings easily.*)

Lights shift. The stage is split. On one side sits Bill, at a table, playing air-piano. On the other side, Faust and Wagner watch through a one-way mirror.

Wagner

Bill Halyn. Male, age 35.

Faust

Born with Williams Syndrome.

Wagner

A few days ago his father found him passed out at his piano. Took him to the E.R. A colleague of mine at the Medical Center referred him to us.

Faust

How severe are his symptoms?

Wagner

(Reading from his chart) Supravalvular aortic stenosis, coronary artery stenosis and heart lesions. He also has renal insufficiency, diverticula of the bladder and recurrent urinary tract infections. He walks with a pronounced limp due to scoliosis of the spine. Hypersensitive to loud sounds. IQ is 62.

Beat.

Faust

What is he doing?

Wagner

Playing piano.

Faust

Music.

Wagner nods.

Wagner

His instrument of choice is the piano, but he also plays clarinet, trombone, drums and he's learning the violin. It's fascinating ... he reads at a third-grade level and can't do basic math, but he can learn to play an instrument to professional standards in a week.

Pause. They watch for a moment.

Wagner

What do you think?

Faust

Take a full history and make an appointment. It may take awhile, but we'll work him in.

Lights shift back to Mephistopheles.

Mephistopheles

a proclamation to my cyborg nation: *(He reaches up and plucks a small wooden ball out of thin air)*

in the beginning
life was a song played on xylophone bones
a skeleton of a symphony, or
an opus written to be performed
on a rib cage marimba
but there was music there
in rocks and stones and cavemen and
chromosomes
you heard the humming bees and hummingbirds
since it was all song and no one knew the words
(Throughout these lines, he performs a series of flourishes where the wooden balls appear and disappear at will.)

someone said there's only one degree of separation
between those singers
and me and my cyborg nation
(A flourish. A second ball appears.)

i'm reaching back to my roots
to ask those five basic questions:
(He produces a silk scarf which he passes over his hand.)
who
what
when
where
and finally
HOW?
(He pulls the scarf away to reveal four balls, each reveal on one word of the above.)
but the chromosome choir members don't move
they only ask
"WHAT NOW?"

Lights up. Procedure room.

Wagner

McKenzie Callaway. Female. Six years old.

Faust

(checking the patient's wristband and chart) Good. The sample cells took to the viral vector well, and there were no complications with the transfer. We're ready to introduce the new genetic material to the patient's system. Bring it in, please.

Mephistopheles

You got it.

He exits. Pause.

Diane? Faust

What? Wagner

You're awfully quiet. Faust

She's stable. Wagner

What's wrong? Faust

Nothing. Wagner

Why don't I believe you? Faust

It's just ... I'm not sure about this procedure. Wagner

You reviewed the charts. Faust

It's not that. Wagner

Beat.

Diane. You're reading too much into what we're doing. It's a procedure. Nothing more. Faust

I don't think brown eyes require correction. Or red hair. Or freckles. Wagner

Her parents think otherwise. Faust

I have brown eyes. Wagner

Faust

This has nothing to do with you.

Mephistopheles enters with a banana bag and tubing. The side of the bag says CAUTION! ACTIVE VIRUS! on the side.

Mephistopheles

Here's the new genetic material, doctor. Ready when you are.

Faust starts to hand it to Wagner and stops.

Faust

I'll do it. Monitor her vitals, Diane.

Faust hooks the bag to the gurney and inserts the tube into her arm. Lights shift.

Mephistopheles

What is your substance, whereof are you made,
That millions of strange shadows on you tend?
Since everyone hath, every one, one shade,
And you but one, can every shadow lend.

Perfect Girl

Perfect... perfection... what you name perfection... alter... altered... deep alterations... *(Nurse crawls out of the trunk)* beautician in my mother's womb... *(image of pregnant woman)*

Mephistopheles

Describe Adonis,

(Model crawls out.)

And the counterfeit
Is poorly imitated after you.

Nurse

Beautician... beautified... beautiful?

Model

Superior eyes *(image of eyes)*... nose *(image of nose; Housewife crawls out of the trunk)*...
mouth *(image of mouth)*...

ALL

All in the perfect image of the Creator *(image of a magazine cover with a supermodel on the front)*... creating... creation *(image of the big bang)*... the big creation... the little creation *(image of a DNA strand)*... everything in between *(image of humans and animals all together)*...

Mephistopheles

On Helen's cheek all art of beauty set,
And you in Grecian tires are painted new.

Nurse

But the little (*image of a cell*)...

Perfect Girl

The little (*image of a DNA strand*)...

Housewife

The small... the key (*image of a key*)... The map (*image of a map*)...

Perfect Girl

How to engineer (*image of DNA*)...How to engineer me...

Nurse

How to engineer happiness (*image of a frowning mouth*)

Housewife

How to be perfect in every way (*image of a 1950s housewife cooking or cleaning*)

ALL

How to make everyone happy (*image of a family with each member smiling except the mother*)

Model

My happiness (*image of a supermodel*)...

Nurse

Fix before birth (*image of an ultrasound*)... Altered in the womb (*image of an embryo next to cosmetics*)...

ALL

To make me happy to make others happy (*image of a woman who's actually frowning but has a literally painted on smile; Firefighter, Action Hero, and Actor crawl out of the trunk*)...

ALL but Perfect Girl

Pause! *The ensemble freezes.*

Mephistopheles

Speak of the spring, and foison of the year,
The one doth shadow of your beauty show,
The other as your bounty doth appear;
And you in every blessed shape we know.

(Techno music and campy lights. As each body part is mentioned, an image of that body part is projected on the Perfect Girl.)

Actor

All these people kill themselves in the gym because they want to look like me like I have

ALL

(*stripper poses*) GREAT SEX

Actor

With

ALL

(*another stripper pose*) BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE

Firefighter

First off, I don't think they realize that's not even me

Actor

My (*thighs*) THIGHS are bigger and my (*stomach*) STOMACH is definitely not a washboard

ALL

(*neutral stance*) FUCK!

Model

Did they give me (*eyes*) BLUE EYES? My eyes are brown for fuck sake

Firefighter

(*calves*) and everyone is afraid these days of technology taking over like

Perfect Girl

(*arms*) TERMINATOR or

ALL but Perfect Girl

(*neutral stance*) We're all cyborgs (*sexy poses*)

Model

I'm the standard for the (*crotch*) procreation and (*ass*) recreation of generations

Action Hero

(*whispers*) I'm a cyborg too

Firefighter

(*face*) the computers they

Nurse

(*torso*) fix my body and I make a living

Housewife

(hips) I'm not a

ALL

(sexy poses) MODEL

Nurse

Without them and I'm

Action Hero

Turning the world into cyborgs

Perfect Girl

Like the women connected to the treadmills and the men feeding off of the sweat and pheromones of other men on the bench press and I'm ushering in the fall of humanity like

Nurse

Technology is an IV and our vanity is the sickness... no... imperfection is the disease and we drip whitewash in our veins until

Lumberjack

Our blood cells are pixels and my god

Perfect Girl

I'm so fucking scared like god opening his magazine of judgment and my name is everywhere like

ALL

(neutral stance) I AM BABYLON THE GREAT (sexy poses)

Perfect Girl

And I hope god knows the pictures of me he sees in his judgment mag aren't really me

Mephistopheles

In all external grace you have some part,
But you like none, none you, for constant heart.

Mephistopheles snaps. Ensemble freezes. A loud beeping.

Wagner

John ... John! Wake up!! I need you!

Faust snaps out of his daze and hurries to the gurney.

Faust

What happened?!

Wagner

I don't know. One minute she was fine. The next she started seizing. Her heart's stopped.

Faust

I don't understand.

Wagner starts CPR.

Wagner

Hand me that syringe!

Faust

I'll do it.

Wagner

You're not a doctor! You don't know what / you're doing!

Faust

Get out of my way. I can save her!!

Wagner grabs Faust from behind and tries to stop him.

Wagner

John! Give me the syringe and / step away. Now!

Faust

You can't help her Diane. You don't have the capability, but I / do. I can save her!

Wagner

You're way out of line!

Faust takes the syringe and spears it into the patient's heart.

Faust

Shock her!

Wagner hesitates.

Faust

NOW!

Wagner

Clear!

Wagner shocks the patient. The flatline continues.

Faust

AGAIN!

Wagner

Clear!

She shocks. Nothing.

Faust

Again!

He pounds on her chest.

Faust

Again, Diane, are you fucking deaf!?

Wagner

John, stop.

He keeps beating on her chest.

She's been down too long.

Faust stops. Long pause.

I'll tell her parents.

Wagner exits. Faust looks at the body on the gurney. Mephistopheles crosses to Faust and looks at the banana bag.

Mephistopheles

Oops.

Faust

Oops. Oops!? What do you mean oops!?

Mephistopheles

Did you check the bag?

Faust

What do you mean "did I check the bag"? Of course I did.

Mephistopheles

Because I could've sworn I gave you the disabled virus. (shrugs) I might be wrong.

Faust

You gave her active Ceranus?!

Mephistopheles

You gave it to her, John.

Faust

You handed me the bag! You were / supposed to...

Mephistopheles

Did you double check it?

Pause.

Mephistopheles

It was bound to happen sooner or later. Don't worry. These things have a way of working themselves out.

Lights change. Hymn music. The ensemble sings the following hymn as Mephistopheles wheels the body offstage.

Ensemble

LORD GOD, WE SEEK THY BLESSING THAT OUR HEALING HANDS DIVINE
MAY CURE THY BROKEN CHILDREN WITH BEAST AND FOWL AND SWINE

THY EARTHLY KINGDOM CALLS TO THEE, THY HOLY HEART OF STONE
BUT OUR PRAYERS FALL DEAF UPON THY EARS AND WE ARE ON OUR OWN

SUFF'RING ALONE, WE SURVIVE THY PAINFUL PLAN.
BUT SINCE YOU WILL NOT SAVE US, WE TURN TO THE HANDS OF MAN.

Mephistopheles pulls out a remote control and turns on a projection.

Host

We're back with Dr. John Faust, Head of Research and Development at Mephisto Pharmaceuticals. At the break, we were talking about Dr. Faust's work on the treatment, or cure, for leukemia. Was the discovery satisfying for you?

Faust

It was extremely satisfying, but I know we can do better.

Host

The cure for leukemia isn't enough?

Faust

Finding the cure for leukemia was unprecedented. Because of this discovery, Mephisto Pharmaceuticals has saved thousands of people. Is that enough? I don't think so. If we can keep saving lives isn't it criminal to stop?

Host

But you're not just focusing on curing diseases. You've been doing other kinds of research.

Faust

Finding better treatments and cures for diseases is our main priority at Mephisto. (pause) But yes, we have been doing other kinds of research.

Host

Would you define this "other" work as being scientifically viable?

Faust

Yes. Of course.

Host

Dr. Faust, your work, which uses viral vectors to stimulate gene replacement, has brought you great success, but it is still highly controversial.

Faust

Unrightfully so.

Host

Do you believe this research should be used for cosmetic means?

Faust

Cosmetic?

Host

If a mother wanted to change her baby's hair and eye color, should she be allowed to make that decision?

Faust

I am only involved in the research. I can't control how that research is implemented.

Host

Were you involved in the recent death of McKenzie Callaway at the clinic?

Faust

I was present.

Host

Why was she being treated?

Faust

She had ... defective genes.

Host

Defective genes?

Faust

They were defective. Her parents brought her in for a common procedure. Something went wrong. I assure you it won't happen again.

Host

That doesn't bring her back.

Faust

No, it doesn't. (pause) But it's one girl. One life. How many countless lives have we lost to further our knowledge about medicine and its applications? I am thankful to only have one death on my conscience.

Host

Every life is important, Dr. Faust. No one is better than anyone else.

Faust

Well, of course not. No.

Host

And we don't let people die for research purposes.

Faust

I was not doing research on her. She was in for / a procedure.

Host

Why were McKenzie's genes defective?

(Long pause)

Faust

I don't believe I am allowed to share a patient's medical history on television.

Host

You can't tell us why this six year old girl was undergoing genetic alterations?

Faust

That information is confidential. You will have to speak with her parents.

Host

Whether or not you can reveal her medical history doesn't bring her back from the dead.

Mephistopheles switches off the screen. Faust and Forsythe are sitting in towels in a steam room.

Forsythe

That show. You shouldn't have gone on it. We could've covered the death.

Faust

I know, I. It was a / mistake. It won't ...

Forsythe

Used to be, you'd say Mephisto and people would think about babies smiling, you know, happy shit. You say it now and all they're going to think about is a little girl dead on a table.

Faust

The other procedures have been successful.

Forsythe

I know that John, I do. We, we've helped people, and we're going to help more people. What's wrong with this picture?

Faust

The girl died. We didn't kill her, Edward.

Forsythe

People want to be treated, they don't want to die. (Beat) Don't you know how the company responds to bad press? We've got to find the source. Snuff it out. Because the investors, they start to get nervous, and when they're nervous, the Board of Directors is scared. And they're frightened right now, John, really frightened. They're pulling your funding.

Faust

They're doing what?!

Forsythe

You're gonna be reassigned.

Faust

I need to be in research and development. They can't pull me off the front lines.

Forsythe

It's done, John.

Faust

We're revolutionizing the field. I can't stop now.

Forsythe

You could've been fired.

Faust

Fired?

Forsythe

They wanted you to be the sacrificial lamb. But I saved you John. I did that. Me. I told them you were too important. But they had to do something. They had to give the press something.

Faust

So they took it away. They took it all away.

Forsythe

If you don't have any money, you can't kill anyone else. But you can't save anyone either.

Faust

(Beat) You said they were reassigning me?

Forsythe

Yeah. You're gonna be under my direct supervision.

Faust

I don't understand.

Forsythe

The girl's death was an accident. Other people don't understand that, but I do. Your research needs to continue. We'll find some other way to get the money you need.

Faust

(beat) What about outside sources?

Forsythe

Outside sources?

Faust

Investments from other sectors of private industry. Or the government.

Forsythe

The money's out there. How do we get it?

Faust

You know, "You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours."

Forsythe

Give them what they want, but only give it to them if it helps you.

Faust

Yes.

Forsythe

You could've been a businessman.

An impressive woman enters wearing an expensive robe.

Guisewhite

Good evening gentlemen. Edward.

Forsythe

Daphna. Good to see you. *(To Faust)* John, this is Defense Secretary Daphna Guisewhite.

Guisewhite extends her hand.

Guisewhite

It's a pleasure to meet you, Dr. Faust.

Faust (to Forsythe)

Is she ...?

Forsythe

Don't worry, John. Daphna's got more balls than either of us.

Lights shift to an examination room.

Bill

♪Oh she watches me while I sign my name, *sign my name*. Oh she smiles and giggles as I sing, *as I sing*. Oh these papers are quite the storm and the temperature very warm. Then I say "Completed!" I remain seated as the man hands me another form.♪

Wagner

That was a great Bill. Thank you.

Bill

I hope it brightens your day! And energizes you. You look tired.

Wagner

It's been "one of those days" all week.

Mephistopheles

Just sign these two lines there and initial at the bottom.

Bill

(Signs) Done. *(Signs)* Finé. *(Initials)* Concluded.

Mephistopheles

This last one is your consent form.

Bill signs the final form. Mephistopheles collects them.

Mephistopheles

Thank you, Mr. Halyn.

Bill

You're welcome.

Wagner

You'll need to be sedated while we collect the first sample. Would you like to swallow a liquid or take a pill?

Bill sees this giant horse pill.

Bill

Better go with the liquid. I don't swallow big pills too well. I choked once and went to the hospital.

Wagner mixes cloudy fluid into a small cup.

Wagner

I hear the piano is your favorite instrument.

Bill

Oh, yes! Yes! I play lots of instruments, but the piano is my best friend. You should come to a concert I'm playing. I can't wait. We're raising money for the homeless.

Wagner

Perhaps I will.

Wagner gives Bill the cup.

Here, drink this.

Bill drinks it quickly.

You should start to feel sleepy in a few minutes.

Bill

I like sleeping. Makes the day go by. Will you get sleep? You still look tired.

Wagner

I expect I will at the end of tomorrow.

Bill

Will the surgery be loud?

Wagner

It isn't exactly a surgery. But it won't be loud. It'll be very quiet so we can concentrate.

Bill

That's good. I can't wait to fall asleep. I stayed up late last night on purpose! The prospect of running is super cool! And to fully breathe without a sharp pain! Imagine me playing the piano while boogieing!

Wagner

When is that concert by the way?

Bill

Ten days!

Wagner

Depending on how well the procedure goes, and the recovery time, you may have to postpone it.

Bill

Okay.

Wagner

That's just a maybe. Remember, Bill, this is our first attempt at treating Williams Syndrome. It's still experimental.

Bill

But will I be like, like I always wanted to be?

Wagner

We hope so.

Bill

What about my face? Will it be like everyone else's?

Wagner

After today's infusion we'll wait to see how your body accepts the new material. Your bone structure should eventually repair itself. If you want to speed up the process, you can have reconstructive surgery in a few months.

Bill

No problem. (beat) I'm learning to play the violin!

Wagner

Bill. You should be aware that it's possible you may lose some musical ability as a result of the procedure.

Bill

What? I'll lose...

Wagner

Well, Bill, the procedure / is very...

Bill

Why?

Wagner

Perhaps I / should've...

Bill

NO! NO!

Wagner

Bill, would you please let / me finish?

Bill

That, that can not happen! Music's my dictionary! I can't talk or express without it.

Wagner

Mr. Halyn. Calm down. It / won't be that...

Bill

That is all I am! ALL!

Wagner

Try not to get so upset!

Bill

Upset!? What should I be?

Wagner

If you'll listen to me, I'll / explain...

Bill

What can you possibly tell me now? Music is my food. Keeps me going.

Wagner

Lose wasn't the right word. I shouldn't have said it, and I'm sorry I did. Temporarily repressed is probably more accurate.

Bill

Can't I keep my music?

Wagner

I don't know, Bill. I don't know.

Bill

You aspiate self-termination of what I deem unique. (beat) I must decline.

Wagner

There's a chance you'll come out of this procedure as talented as you are now.

Bill

Forget it.

Wagner

Will you excuse me, please?

Wagner exits. Bill air-piano's a comfort song. Lights shift to the steam room.

Guisewhite

Your leukemia treatments saved my brother. He had a grim prognosis when he was diagnosed. I called Edward.

Forsythe

The treatments, they hadn't been approved by the FDA. I made some calls. Pulled a few strings.

Guisewhite

The cancer went into remission. He's fine now, and it's all thanks to you and your research.

Faust

Thank you, Madam Secretary.

Guisewhite

I admire you, Dr. Faust. You take pride in you work. Don't listen to the press. You're saving lives, and that's what's important. But saving lives does require sacrifices.

Faust

Sacrifices?

Guisewhite

The young people today who sign up for active service are not the best the country has to offer. They make mistakes. The country can no longer rely on them for protection. Because troops have had their tours of duty extended many times, they are becoming less effective in combat. With enlistment dwindling, Congress is discussing the implications of a draft.

Forsythe

Then you're dealing with civilians. They're more inexperienced. Make more mistakes.

Guisewhite

In order for the government to ensure the security and stability of the American people, a decisive course of action must be taken.

Faust

Sacrifices will need to be made.

Guisewhite

Do you understand, Dr. Faust?

Faust

Yes, Madam Secretary. I do.

Guisewhite glances around for a moment or so, then proceeds.

Guisewhite

Ever since I was little, I have been fascinated by athletes, and like the Greeks, I idolized them. What they could do in combat amazed me. They are the perfect representations of the human form.

Faust

Athletes have been biologically and chemically enhanced for years. They're no longer natural or pure.

Guisewhite

They make sacrifices. To achieve perfection, their bodies and attitudes must be honed through extensive training and drug regimens. They emerge youthful, strong, agile, and obedient.

Faust

I could feasibly engineer those characteristics using gene replacement, Madame Secretary.

Guisewhite

Feasibly?

Forsythe

No worries Daphna. It's top of the line. You'd be amazed what gene replacement can do.

Guisewhite

That's all well and good, but can *you* make it work for *me* Dr. Faust?

Faust

It won't be a problem at all, Madam Secretary. I can engineer the characteristics you want in your "athletes". I give you my word.

Guisewhite

Our goal should be nothing short of perfection. Youth, strength, agility, and obedience are qualities found in superior beings.

Faust

Athletes and soldiers.

Forsythe

John will start his work immediately.

Guisewhite

Do not let the microscope be your only inspiration, Dr. Faust. History and philosophy are just as essential.

Faust

I keep Ovid by my bedside.

Guisewhite

The metamorphosis of our athletes must be swift because they are desperately needed in combat. *(Beat)* A country's leaders, in times of war, are often faced with making radical and difficult choices.

Faust

You've made the right one, Madam Secretary.

Guisewhite

I hope so, Dr. Faust.

Mephistopheles pulls Faust out of the steam room and dresses him roughly.

Mephistopheles

Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth
Of sun-split clouds, and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of, wheeled and soared and swung
High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there,
I've chased the shouting wind along and flung
My eager craft through footless halls of air.
Up, up the long, delirious, burning blue
I've topped the windswept heights with easy grace
Where never lark, or even eagle flew
And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod

The high untrespassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.

He reaches out and pulls a coin from Faust's ear. He shoves him toward Wagner.

Wagner
Mr. Halyn, please tell Dr. Faust what you just told me.

Bill
I expeditiously revoke my signature.

Faust.
Why?

Bill
Because you tricked me!

Faust
Mr. Halyn, please. You are the first patient ever to receive this treatment. You will help thousands of patients with William's Syndrome. You're a pioneer.

Bill
I don't want to be a pioneer.

Bill stumbles.

Ugh, I feel sleepy now. I just want to play my piano.

Wagner
The medication is taking effect.

Bill
Modifications are not necessary. Please, no, please...no, no sleep.

Bill hugs Wagner by her waist.

Wagner
It'll be okay Bill. You'll be all right.

Bill
Thanks for helping me...

Bill nods his head.

Wagner
John, help me put him on the table.

Faust and Wagner lift Bill, now unconscious, onto the table.

Mephistopheles

We're ready to begin.

Wagner

There's nothing to begin. The patient revoked consent.

Beat.

Faust

(To Mephistopheles) Wheel him in.

Wagner

What?

Faust

Wheel him in.

Mephistopheles moves the gurney as the lights change. He hands Faust the banana bag and tubing.

Mephistopheles

The new genetic material is ready for infusion, doctor.

Faust

Let's have it.

Mephistopheles hands the banana bag to Faust. He hangs it on the gurney and starts to connect it. Wagner enters.

Wagner

(To Mephistopheles) Get out.

He steps back, but continues to observe the scene.

Wagner

(To Faust) Stop.

Faust

Stop?

Wagner

Stop now. Before it's too late.

Faust

Before it's too late for what Diane?

Wagner

We don't know enough about this procedure. The data isn't conclusive.

Faust

We know precisely where the missing genes are and how to insert the correct sequences. What more do you want to know?

Wagner

We have yet to determine the effect such an alteration will have on a person's creative abilities.

Faust

Once the sequence is corrected, he will be completely normal.

Wagner

What if the procedure debilitates him in some unforeseen way?

Faust

Risk is a part of the business Wagner.

Wagner

We cannot proceed without a patient's consent.

Faust

We have his consent. On paper. Whatever he might have said after being sedated is irrelevant. Anesthesia can play tricks on the mind.

Wagner

The only one playing tricks here is you John. You're a doctor. How can you justify going forward with a procedure this patient has explicitly forbidden?

Faust

I don't have to abide by your oaths and your rules. We're doing what's best for Bill.

Wagner

You don't care about Bill. You only care about yourself.

Faust

How dare you.

Wagner

Stop the procedure. Prove me wrong.

Faust

I am not stopping because of your petty bullshit.

Wagner

Stop or I'll go public. You'll be ruined.

Faust

Was that a threat, Dr. Wagner?

Wagner

Please, John. There are some lines you just don't cross. Don't make me do this to you.

Faust

Do what? Go public? Be my guest. Tell the world that Bill revoked consent.

Wagner

I'm serious. I'll do it.

Faust

I don't doubt your sincerity, Dr. Wagner. And with the consent forms signed by Bill and the video surveillance of you standing right here next to me preparing for the procedure, you have everything you need to ruin me forever.

Don't ever threaten me, Diane. I could destroy you with a single phone call.

Now, I suggest you either take ten and cool off or pack your office and get out.

Wagner

You son of a bitch.

Faust

Diane. Diane!

She leaves. Mephistopheles crosses to Faust.

Mephistopheles

Well. That was unexpected.

Faust

She'll be back.

Mephistopheles

Sure. She'll be back. But in the meantime, what are you going to do?

Faust

Excuse me?

Mephistopheles

Are you going to stop? Or keep going?

Blackout. Lights on Mephistopheles. As he speaks he toys with a small, tangible light, passing it from hand to hand, swallowing it, etc.

Mephistopheles

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him. Without him was not anything made that has been made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness. The darkness hasn't overcome it.

He was in the world, and the world was made through him. But the world didn't recognize him. The world didn't recognize him anymore.

He tosses the light into the air, and it disappears. Lights shift. A room in the clinic. Faust sits across the table from a young soldier. Guisewhite and Forsythe observe the scene through a one-way mirror.

Faust

Private Jacob Samsa?

Jacob

Yes. (Beat) Sir! Sorry.

Faust

I'm not an officer Jacob. You don't need to address me as "sir". I'm Dr. Faust. Samsa's an interesting name.

Jacob (proudly)

I got it from my father. He's in the military. Or he was. He served in the Gulf War. Sir.

Faust

Do you know why you're here today Jacob?

Jacob

For the treatment. I heard about it. From the other guys in my unit. I got excited 'cause it sounded like something I could do. Sir.

Forsythe

There's been talk amongst the soldiers?

Faust

Something you *could* do?

Guisewhite

Dr. Faust suggested that we start rumors on a few bases. If the men were interested in the treatment, they could come forward and not have to be randomly selected.

Jacob

I've always been, you know, small. Not very strong. I still ain't.

Guisewhite

They would feel as if they made the choice.

Jacob

I've always wanted to do *things* other people, you know, can't do. Great things.

Faust

Wonderful things.

Jacob

Yeah. I wanna, uh, "exceed" what the others can do.

Faust

Well, Jacob, our program / will give you...

Jacob

Sir!

Faust

Yes, Jacob, thank you. As I was saying, our program will give you the opportunity to exceed. However, before you can be accepted, I need you to tell me why I should select you.

Guisewhite

Dr. Faust truly puts the decision in their hands.

Forsythe

John's always been a good negotiator.

Jacob

I love my country. And I'm committed. Real committed. And loyal! I'm like a dog, sir. I'll do whatever you tell me.

Faust

You are a true patriot, Jacob. I've looked through your files and I'm impressed.

Jacob (bashfully)

Thank you. Sir.

Faust

I am pleased to formally welcome you into our program. Congratulations.

Jacob

You serious?

Faust nods.

Jacob

I cain't believe it! I didn't think you was gonna take me. Thank you, sir, thank you.

Faust

Jacob, this project is top secret. You can't tell anyone about it. Do I make myself clear?

Jacob

Abso-friggin'-lutely! (Pause) Sir!

Faust

Good, good. Are you ready to serve your country in the best way possible?

Jacob

Sir! Yes, sir!

Faust

Then I need for you to sign a few forms.

Mephistopheles appears and sits in Faust's seat. They exchange a look.

Faust

It was nice to meet you, Jacob. I look forward to seeing you again.

Faust steps up beside Forsythe and Guisewhite. Mephistopheles spreads several forms out on the table in front of Jacob. Their dialogue continues in silence.

Guisewhite

What progress have you made on the other two soldiers, Dr. Faust?

Faust

I've finished sequencing their genes. They get the first treatment tomorrow.

Guisewhite

How long is the recovery period?

Faust

A few weeks, maybe.

Forsythe

Remember, John, the sooner, the better.

Guisewhite

Twelve of our men were killed this morning when the enemy bombed a convoy. The longer we wait the more lives we lose.

Faust

Madam Secretary, these new soldiers won't survive an explosion. I can't create Supermen.

Guisewhite

Of course not, Dr. Faust. I'm not unrealistic. But if these soldiers can out-perform the other units, maybe they can out-perform the enemy as well.

Forsythe

I see no reason why they shouldn't.

Guisewhite

"Of bodies changed to various forms, I sing/ Ye Gods, from whom these miracles did spring..."

Faust

"...Inspire my numbers with celestial heat;/ Till I my long laborious work complete..."

Guisewhite

You know your Ovid, Dr. Faust. (Beat) I don't want to compromise your research with deadlines, but the President is expecting results soon. The situation is dire.

Jacob finishes signing the papers. He stands and shakes Mephistopheles' hand. Jacob salutes and exits. Mephistopheles begins collecting the signed documents on the table.

Forsythe

John will double his efforts.

Guisewhite

Excellent. I expect great things from you, Dr. Faust. The country deserves only the best.

Forsythe

And Mephisto will provide them with the best.

Mephistopheles

(Turns to the audience) "From such rude principles our form began;/ And Earth was metamorphos'd into man."

Lights shift. Bill walks into a room, alone. In the center of the room is his piano. He touches the outer edges before sitting down on the bench.

Bill

Hey you. I've missed you.

Bill prepares to play, but he can't touch the keys. Finally, he decides to play a single C note. As he pushes the key, his hand catches slightly the B key with it. He jerks his hand away.

Bill

Damn society, you know. I can't even talk like me. Who am I now? Please help me. You are all I have.

He bangs his hands on the piano, a loud discordant sound. He jumps away.

Bill

I'm sorry! I'm so sorry!

Bill sits again. He plays his first piece, one note at a time. Bill's confidence level raises a little. He tries again, a little faster. He stops.

Bill

I'm happy and I'm not.

Bill plays through his piece. There are mistakes, and it's missing the feeling of his first performance.

Bill

Maybe I need real confidence. Maybe there are too many maybes.

Bill hugs his piano. Blackout.

(Video Projected onto screen: A Female Worker stands in her Boss's office. She is crying.)

Female Worker: Why can't I have time off to go to my mother's funeral?

Boss: Fairsley's out sick again, and you're the only project manager.

Female Worker: But it's not fair! Fairsley's always sick!

(Cut to a luxurious bedroom where Fairsley is lounging on an extravagant bed with silken sheets. He looks like he is sick with snot freely running out of his nose, but he also appears smug. A maid brings in some soup on a tray for him and ties a bib around his neck.)

Fairsley: *(puppy dog face, pleading)* Ladle the soup into my mouth?

(Cut back to the office. The Boss shakes her head sadly.)

Boss: I'll get sued if I fire him for being sick. If only there was some way I could've learned about his perpetual sickness before I hired him...

(Mayhew Lazlo enthusiastically kicks open the office door. The camera zooms in on his face as he screams...)

Mayhew Lazlo: There is!

(Mayhew Lazlo bounds inside with wildly manic energy. He wears a garish suit covered with the letters A, C, G, and T. He has a ridiculous bowtie that looks like a double helix. His socks do not match. As he begins to talk, he flails his limbs about as wildly as he possibly can and swiftly moves around the entire space of the office. He is talking straight into the camera now.)

Mayhew Lazlo: *(with a preposterous grin)* I'm Mayhew Lazlo, and I'm dead!

(The Boss and the Female Worker gasp.)

Mayhew Lazlo: ...or at least I would've been if I hadn't been genetically screened!

(Both the Boss and the Female Worker sigh in relief)

Mayhew Lazlo: I didn't know about this horrible genetic disease I had until I got my DNA screened.

(Dina the DNA strand, a person dressed up in a double helix mascot-type costume with oversized googly eyes, materializes in the office. On the costume, there are base pairs labeled specifically in As, Gs, Cs, and Ts. Dina begins dancing.)

Mayhew Lazlo: Once I learned about my horrible disease, I made some simple life changes. Look at me-I'm thriving. But that's not enough! I wanted to help other people discover how genetic screening can help them make a better life for themselves and everyone around them! With my new *Do-It-Yourself Genetic Screening for a Better Life Kits*...

(An image of what seems to be a wildly oversized children's lunch box clearly labeled with the words "Genetic Screening for a Better Life" appears. The box stands upright, and the contents of the kit are sitting out on the table. There is a manual, an instructional video, a baseball cap, some latex gloves, a bunch of cotton swabs, and several things that look rather like home pregnancy tests but are labeled "DNA Screeners".)

Mayhew Lazlo: ...you can screen yourself and everyone around you for horrible genetic diseases like SDS and for certain tendencies toward illness. These kits can help you *anywhere*, from your home to your workplace!

(The kit has, by now, disappeared. Lazlo jumps up into the air. He freezes in that spot, and his image begins grow until his DNA bow tie dominates the screen. The camera pulls back to reveal Lazlo in Fairsley's bed. Fairsley looks surprised as he stares at Lazlo.)

Mayhew Lazlo: *(reaching toward Fairsley with a cotton swab in his hand)* If this young man were screened...

(Fairsley opens his mouth as if to protest, but all that comes out is the image of Dina the DNA tap dancing on his tongue. Lazlo swabs Fairsley's tongue and places the end of the cotton swab onto a DNA Screener in his other hand. As Lazlo continues speaking, a bright red "X" shows up on the DNA Screener.)

Mayhew Lazlo: ...you'd see that his genetic make-up reveals a suppressed immune system that causes him to be outrageously susceptible to various simple illnesses, a fact that he used to his advantage in the office! But if he had been genetically screened beforehand...

(The video cuts to the Boss's office. The Female Worker is standing in front of her Boss, crying like before.)

Female Worker: I need the next few days off for my mother's funeral.

Boss: Take off the rest of the week if you need. Johnson will be perfectly able and willing to cover for you. He's never sick. Good thing we didn't hire that constantly ill Fairsley fellow, eh?

(The Female Worker and Boss laugh. Lazlo slowly rises up from behind the Boss's desk where he had been hiding. He is laughing, too. He suddenly snaps his fingers, and all three of them are in Fairsley's bedroom where Fairsley is still lying down. All of four of them have one of the kits in their hands.)

Fairsley: *(to the camera)* Golly! I guess I never realized how inconsiderate I've been.

Mayhew Lazlo: Well, that's what genetic screening is here for, my friend!

(In the video, Dina materializes in the bedroom on video. Everyone points at Dina and begin to chase Dina when she runs away. A short Benny Hill-inspired chase sequence ensues.)

Mayhew Lazlo: *(voice over)* So don't forget to buy a *Do-It-Yourself Genetic Screening for a Better Life Kit*, for just one hundred dollars!

(As Lazlo voice over continues, an image of the kit appears again, accompanied by a bright image of the figure "\$100".)

Mayhew Lazlo: *(voice over)* The future of genetics for only one hundred dollars. Think of the possibilities!

The projection screen switches off. The lights come up on Faust and Mephistopheles who are in a lab. Mephistopheles is holding a remote control.

Mephistopheles

The things people sell these days. What's the world coming to?

Faust

Leave me alone.

Mephistopheles

What's wrong, John? Don't you like your new arrangement?

(Pause)

Is something the matter?

Faust

My work is being exploited.

Mephistopheles

You can't patent the genome.

Faust

I'm not talking about the commercial.

Mephistopheles

That what are you talking about?

Faust

You're ruining everything! I wouldn't be / down here...

Mephistopheles

I'm ruining everything?

Faust

I wouldn't be down here at all if you hadn't killed that kid.

Mephistopheles

I didn't kill anyone. You did. Well, actually it was the virus /, but...

Faust

You gave it to me! You handed me an unaltered virus. It was your fault.

Mephistopheles

I can hardly be blamed for your oversights. It's up to you to double check your work. But no worries, John. You're a visionary. You can't be bothered with details.

Faust

What do you want?

Mephistopheles

This package just came for you. *(He looks at some papers on Faust's desk)* I see the soldiers are coming along nicely. Ready for combat yet?

Faust

No. We've been noticing strange anomalies. Interactions between the altered genes that we didn't predict. *(Beat)* Tell me how to fix it.

Mephistopheles

I can't do that, John. Remember the wager?

Faust

Do you?

Mephistopheles

Of course I do. You're not my first client.

Faust

You said unlimited knowledge. You said "magic at my fingertips."

Mephistopheles

On one condition.

Faust

It's your fault! You cheated. You forced me to do harm.

Mephistopheles

I forced nothing. You acted under your own volition and now you're whoring yourself out to the government.

Faust

What else can I do? I have to make these soldiers in order to do my other work.

Mephistopheles

You mean your work with the retarded fellow?

Faust

Fuck you.

Mephistopheles

Leave now and lose everything.

Faust

You can't have my soul. I won't give it to you.

Mephistopheles

Is that right?

Mephistopheles snaps as Forsythe enters.

Forsythe

Daphna called. She's upset John. We haven't been getting your reports.

Faust

I've been distracted.

Forsythe

Well pick up a test tube.

Faust

I need more time.

Forsythe

More time? The world doesn't start and stop at your convenience.

Faust

I need to run more tests.

Forsythe

More tests?

Faust

I'm worried about side effects. Earlier tests indicated the possibility / for mutation.

Forsythe

Earlier tests? What about the new tests? What do they say?

Faust

I haven't conducted any on the soldiers.

Forsythe

You went into this, these procedures blind?

Faust

I was confident with / the earlier trials.

Forsythe

If you were confident, really confident, with the earlier trials, you wouldn't be doing more trials now.

Faust

I'm taking precautions.

Forsythe

You should've taken precautions before you infused them with your viruses. Not after. They're not lab rats John.

Faust

Every patient I work on is a lab rat.

Forsythe

I don't want to deliver these soldiers to the United States government and have them fall apart or turn into a plant or something.

Faust

A plant?

Forsythe

You said mutations!

Faust

And you think "Swamp Thing"?

Forsythe

Every precaution should've been taken. This is just bad science!

Faust

Weren't you the one, Edward, who said I'd "double my efforts"?

Forsythe

I was under / the impression...

Faust

I've tripled them. And I succeeded. And I will continue to succeed.

Forsythe

I'm in charge here John.

Faust

Yeah. Why don't you go send yourself a case of "Super Hero" or something. I have work to do.

Forsythe

All right, John, all right. You go back to work. But I want everything reported. Every test tube you touch, every gene you splice, I want it in a report on my desk. Am I clear?

Faust

Crystal.

Forsythe

And the soldiers *will* be done on time. Don't fuck this up John. It's your head, not mine.

Forsythe exits. Mephistopheles shrugs and hands the package to Faust before exiting.. He reads the return address.

Faust

"Our Genes Ourselves"?

Faust opens the package and pulls out a painting of Salvador Dali's "Corpus Hypercubus" and a note.

Faust

"Where will you draw the line?"

Faust considers the painting as Wagner enters. She speaks as though giving a lecture to the audience. As she speaks images are projected onto the screens. Wagner does not acknowledge Faust at all.

Wagner

"Corpus Hypercubus."

Faust

Wagner?

Wagner

Salvador Dali. 1954. Oil on canvas. Here we see a male figure impaled, crucified if you will, on the mathematical form of a hypercube.

Faust

What the hell ...

Wagner

A piece of surrealist art depicting man's "crucifixion" on the cross of science as the masses, who are represented by a woman, gaze up at him.

Faust

How did you get in here?

Wagner

In contrast this piece, "Dr Faust and Margaret", is an expressionist oil painting by Victor Demin.

Faust

Get out. Now.

Wagner

In this piece, Faust is seen pursuing his love through this strange landscape at any cost.

Faust

I did nothing wrong. I did the research and I got results.

Wagner

We conclude with another Dali oil on canvas.

Faust

We took risks. We got results!

Wagner

This is "Dream Caused by the Flight of a Bumblebee around a Pomegranate a Second Before Awakening." As you can see, animals morph and blend and culminate in an elephant on stilt-like legs in the background.

Faust

If we didn't take risks, where would we be? What if you had leukemia, Diane?

Wagner

So, where is the connection?

Faust

There's so much more we can do.

Wagner

Science. Art. Imagination. Reality.

Faust

If we are not afraid. If we purge the fear. If we do not turn away from it. That's only what cowards do.

Wagner

How far can science go?

Faust (whispers)

I'm not a coward.

Wagner

How far will the esteemed Dr. Faust go to obtain his Margaret?

Faust

You're distorting the truth. You always distort the truth. I. Help. People. (Beat.) Right?

Wagner

Do we cure disease?

	Faust
Yes. Of course.	
	Wagner
Do we change people?	
	Faust
Only for the better.	
	Wagner
Do we change nature?	
	Faust
I make it better.	
	Wagner
What is Dr Faust afraid of?	
<i>Pause.</i>	
	Faust
Diane.	
<i>She turns to him.</i>	
	Faust
Diane, please. Please come back.	
	Wagner
Dr. Faust?	
	Faust
I can't do this without you. I need you.	
	Wagner
When will Dr. Faust wake up?	
	Faust
Wake up?	
	Wagner
Wake up John.	
Wagner exits the office quickly	

Faust

Diane?

Faust goes to the door

Faust

Diane!

Blackout. Loud knocking.

Forsythe

John. John!

Lights up. Faust is still in his office.

Forsythe

John, for Christ's sake. Open the fucking door!

Faust stands and crosses to the door. He opens it. Forsythe storms into the office.

Faust

Why? What's / going on?

Forsythe

We've got a major problem.

Faust

Edward, I don't / understand ...

Forsythe

The Samsa soldier's gone missing.

Faust

Missing?! What do you mean / missing?

Forsythe

As in he's not fucking here anymore.

Faust

A person can't just / disappear.

Forsythe

We've checked the security cameras. There was a malfunction.

Faust

A malfunction?

Forsythe

For a few minutes.

Faust

This is bad.

Forsythe

We could burn for this John.

Faust

We? It's your security Edward. You're in charge here, remember?

Forsythe

How do I know your little science experiment didn't mutate in some way? Or evaporate or something?

Faust

That's bullshit, and you know it.

Forsythe

Bullshit? I did everything for you. If I burn for this, any of this, you're going to be standing right there next to me.

Faust

Are you threatening me?

The door swings open. Guisewhite enters, enraged. She tosses a videotape at Forsythe. A's, C's, G's and T's on the projection screen morph into an American flag.

Forsythe

Daphna!

Guisewhite

Explain this, please.

Forsythe

Explain the tape?

Guisewhite

I am a very busy woman Edward. I trust experienced men and women to oversee the projects under my supervision. Imagine my surprise when my chief of staff hands me this.

Guisewhite loads the tape into a VCR. Suddenly, on the screen, an image flashes: in the frame is a large, barren field. A few naked trees can be seen in the background. A person is thrust in front

of the camera. He falls into the mud. The person grunts and slowly pushes himself off the ground. He turns and faces the camera.

Faust

It's Jacob Samsa.

On screen, Jacob's face is bloodied and swollen. He appears as if he's been crying. Another person walks into the frame, dressed in white, wearing a ski mask. In his left hand, he holds a machete. The person in the ski mask grabs Jacob by his hair and drags him up off the ground. Jacob screams, but there is no sound. With one swift motion, the man decapitates him. A geyser of blood surges out of Jacob's severed neck, turning the man's white robes to red. Faust cries out and puts his hand over his mouth. In the film, Jacob's body slumps to the ground. Forsythe turns away from the screen. Jacob's blood begins to pool in the muddy field.

Faust doesn't move. The screen goes blank.

Guisewhite

They call themselves "Liberi Incorrupti".

Faust

The uncorrupted are free.

Guisewhite

They oppose any kind of genetic experimentation. The FBI has a file on them.

Forsythe

But why kill Jacob?

Guisewhite

Come on now Edward. Surely you know the answer to that. The bigger question is how "Liberi Incorrupti" found out about our project. And how they managed to sneak in here and kidnap him so easily.

Forsythe

Our security was top of the line. We spared no expenses.

Guisewhite

I'm surprised he wasn't better able to defend himself. I told you, Dr. Faust, I want to save lives, not add to the body count!

Faust

We needed more tests.

Guisewhite

The Defense Department will no longer fund your tests. Your research is now property of the United States government and all files will be transferred to my office immediately. My chief of staff will see that your records are shredded. Good evening, gentlemen.

Forsythe runs after Guisewhite.

Forsythe

Daphna, wait!

Lights shift. Mephistopheles sits on his trunk with a pack of cards and a silk scarf.

Mephistopheles

Thus she spoke; and I longed
to embrace my dead mother's ghost.
Thrice I tried to clasp her
image, and thrice it slipped
through my hands, like a
shadow, like a dream.

*He releases the scarf to show that the cards have disappeared. Lights shift. Faust is alone.
Richard enters.*

Richard

It's you. I knew it.

Faust

Who are you?

Richard

I saw you over here and I knew it had to be you.

Faust

Who do you think I am?

Richard

You're Dr. John Faust. I need your help.

Faust

You're not the only one. You're going to have to take a number and wait in line.

Richard

There isn't a line, Dr. Faust.

Faust

Oh there's a line all right. There's always a line. (beat) What do you want?

Richard

My name's Richard. You operated on me.

Faust

Richard. Of course. How could I forget?

Richard

My parents came to see you before I was conceived. You gave my mother some sort of infusion. Before I was born.

Faust

(remembering) SDS. You were the first.

Richard

It didn't work. Whatever you did to me didn't work.

Faust

I don't understand.

Richard

I'm still ... attracted to men. I don't know why. I'm gay, Dr. Faust. I need you to help me again. Please.

Faust

I don't think—

Richard

Give me more drugs.

Faust

The procedure was to prevent nonrandom X inactivation. I told your father—

Richard

My father won't have anything to do with me anymore. I pray for the strength to ignore it. To kill it. But I can't.

Faust

Richard, there's nothing I can do for you.

Richard

Dr. Faust, you're the only thing I have left. You have to help me.

Faust

I'm a man of science. If science won't explain your condition, then I don't have any answers for you.

Fuck science! Cure me!

Richard

I'm not a magician Richard.

Faust

So what do I do?

Richard

I don't know.

Faust

Pause.

Go to hell, doctor.

Richard

Richard exits. Mephistopheles enters with a box.

Who was that?

Mephistopheles

An old friend. What's that?

Faust

This? Oh. A return.

Mephistopheles

Return?

Faust

Yeah. The Bradshaws. You worked on them a few months ago. It didn't work out.

Mephistopheles

What do you mean it didn't work out?

Faust

Faust opens the box. Inside is an infant.

This is a baby.

Faust

Of course it is.

Mephistopheles

Faust

What's wrong with it?

Mephistopheles

Take a look. The forehead is too wide, the nose is slightly crooked. Looks like his feet aren't straight. His eyes are turning green. (*He consults the receipt.*)

Faust

He's perfectly fine!

Mephistopheles

Nope. Not what they ordered.

Faust

They can't return it!

Mephistopheles

Why not? Satisfaction guaranteed or your money cheerfully refunded!

Faust

They can't—

Mephistopheles

They paid for a service – it turned out badly. They made a return. It's free enterprise!

Faust

It's a baby!

Mephistopheles

It's a product! Your product, John. You made him.

Faust grabs Mephistopheles by the throat.

Faust

What have you done to me?

Mephistopheles

Me?

Faust

You've turned me into a fucking monster.

Mephistopheles pulls out the document with Faust's signature.

Mephistopheles

You traded me nothing, John. Remember? You had nothing to lose!

Faust seizes the contract and rips it apart.

Faust

I am not a monster!

Mephistopheles

No, you're the new savior of mankind. Where does one stop and the other begin?

Faust throws him to the floor. Mephistopheles pulls him toward him. Lights change.

Mephistopheles

You opened the door. It's time to see what's on the other side.

Blackout. Drum roll. Cymbal crash. Mephistopheles voice booms large and loud.

Mephistopheles

Laaaaaaaaaadies and gentlemen! Children of all ages! Gather round to see the latest
WONDERS of the WORLD!

A spotlight appears on Mephistopheles.

Mephistopheles

For your viewing pleasure...the strange. The exotic. The wonderful. The bizarre. All brought to
us courtesy of...THIS MAN!!

Drumroll, cymbal crash. Spotlight moves to illuminate Faust. Music begins.

Mephistopheles

There he is, ladies and gentlemen. The savior of all mankind. The creator of another group of
saviors. Are you ready to meet them?

Mephistopheles

COME SEE THE STRANGE, SEE THE EXOTIC
COME SEE THE WONDERFUL ONE-OF-A-KINDS
DON'T BE AFRAID, THEY'RE HERE TO HELP YOU,
JOHNNY'S A GENIUS YOU'LL FIND

YES, COME MEET THE MAN, COME GREET THE DOCTOR
RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL THE WONDERS YOU'LL SEE
DON'T RUN AWAY! JOHN, YOU'RE A HERO
YOUR CREATURES ARE HERE, AREN'T YOU DYING TO SEE?

(Enter Corn)

Mephistopheles

THINK OF A CORN, THAT FEEDS THE HUNGRY

WE'VE PLAYED WITH HIS GENES SO THAT MEANS THERE'S A LOT!

Mephistopheles and Corn
LOOKIN' FOR BUGS? YOU'LL NEVER FIND 'EM

Corn
I'M JUST WHAT YOU NEED, GUARANTEED I WON'T ROT.

TON UPON TON, I'M BUSHEL OF FUN
YOU'LL NEVER GO HUNGRY AGAIN
MARVELOUS MAIZE, I'M CREATING A CRAZE.
YOU'LL NEVER GO HUNGRY AGAIN.

(Enter OncoMouse)

OncoMouse
ONCOMOUSE IS THE NAME, I'M CURING CANCER
THE ONE AND ONLY PATENTED COMPANY PET!
I HELP THEM WITH DRUGS, I'M BUILT FOR POISON
I FIGHT AND I FIGHT AND I HAVEN'T DIED YET

Mephistopheles
(spoken) Researchers can study...
 carcinogenicity
 tumorigenesis and the mechanisms of tumor development and
 the pharmacological effect of anticancer and chemopreventive agents!

(spoken) Do you understand all that, John?

Faust
Yes.

Mephistopheles
Because we sure as hell don't.

OncoMouse
TEST AFTER TEST, I GIVE THEM MY BEST
CARCINOGENS, TUMORS, IT'S AT THEIR REQUEST.
TRIALS AND TRIALS, FOR PILES OF VIALS
BUT SOONER OR LATER, I'LL BE DEAD LIKE THE REST.

(Enter XenoPig)

XenoPig
GIVE ME A STY, FILL UP MY TROUGH AND
LET ME ABOUT WHERE MY SNOUT CAN RUN FREE

A LIVER I'VE GROWN, A COUPLE KIDNEYS
MIGHT SOMEDAY COME YOUR WAY A LITTLE PRESENT FROM ME.

KIDNEY, TO YOU FROM ME
XENOTRANSPLANTATION! (*spoken*) What will they think of next?
I'M A LIVER GIVER
(*spoken*) I'm the one and only XenoPig!

Mephistopheles, Wagner and XenoPig
(*spoken*) What will they think of next?

(*Enter ChikSupreme*)

Mephistopheles
MEET CHIKSUPREME, SHE'S QUITE A BARGAIN
A LITTLE MORE KICK FOR YOUR CHICKEN DRUMSTICKS!
PRETTY SHE AIN'T, BUT THIS HEN IS HEALTHY
WE'VE BLESSED HER WITH BREASTS AND SHE'S GROWIN' ALL SIX!

ChikSupreme
I'M NOT JUST A BIRD, I'M A REVOLUTION,
THE SOLUTION WITH THE PROTEIN, LET ME SHOW 'EM WHO'S BOSS.
THREE TIMES THE BREASTS, THREE TIMES THE MUSCLE
WANNA TUSSLE? PICK THE RIGHT ROAD AND YOU'LL KNOW WHY I CROSS.

THE CORN AND THE MICE AND THE PIGS ARE ALL NICE

Mephistopheles
BUT CHIKSUPREME CAN HELP YOU STAY STRONG
SIX BREASTS, TAKE A LOOK AT HER CHESTS

ChikSupreme
YOU KNOW I WANNA HELP YOU STAY STRONG.

Mephistopheles
AND NOW YOU'RE THE MAN,

(All, except Faust)
A LIVING LEGEND
YOU'VE TOUCHED ALL OUR HEARTS WITH THE PARTS YOU COMBINED

Mephistopheles
HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE A SAVIOR?
CREATOR OF WONDERFUL, WONDERFUL, WONDERFUL, WONDERFUL,
WONDERFUL, WONDERFUL, WONDERFUL, ONE-OF-A-KINDS.

Wild applause. Music continues under the following.

MEPHISTOPHELES

And lastly, but certainly not least, is the centerpiece of our masquerade.
Please welcome ... ONCOMAN!

Wagner pulls back the curtain unveils to reveal a mutilated and deformed human being wearing underwear. He breathes heavily and has trouble standing up straight.)

Yes ladies and gentleman the hunk of deformed flesh and bone you see before you is the new age messiah. This modern marvel doesn't have to hang from a cross to save your sins, oh no. This man-monster has been infused with modern diseases from AIDS to Zoster so we can study their effects. Not every disease is genetic, but what if we could learn how to control environmental factors to one day cure all these ailments? What if we could make a man with genetically-programmed super-immunity? No more disease! No more suffering! He suffers more and more everyday for your future health. But as they say, what is one life worth? Millions, even billions!

The music crescendos as Faust approaches Oncoman. Oncoman looks pained. He mouths the words "Help me."

Mephistopheles

He's all yours, doc. Your greatest creation. Your sacrifice will save the world. Save the world!

Lights close in around Faust. The ensemble enters as the following text begins to overlap.

Mephistopheles

Great and wonderful things!

Wagner

You have your faith in science.

Mephistopheles

What if you could achieve all these things that haunt you?

Wagner

Would you?

Mephistopheles

How far are you willing to go?

Jacob

I want to show them all back home what I can do.

Wagner

How do we know if we've crossed the line?

Bill

Music is my dictionary.

Mephistopheles

This is a unique moment in human history.

Bill

You asperate self-termination of what I deem unique.

Wagner

Reality defined by illusion.

Bill

Can't I keep my music?

Richard

Sometimes what we want is not what we need.

Mephistopheles

We have the book. What we need is the right man to read it.

Wagner

Are you that man?

Jacob

I love my country, sir. And I'm committed. Real committed.

Richard

You're the only thing I have left.

Mephistopheles

You said you don't believe in the soul.

Wagner

Science. Art. Imagination. Reality.

Mephistopheles

How far are you willing to go?

Wagner

It would be controversial.

Mephistopheles

How far?

Richard

Go to hell, doctor.

Mephistopheles

How far?

Wagner

What is Dr. Faust afraid of?

The overlapping text grows in volume and intensity. Background projections also increase in number, showing scenes from previous projection montages along with a barrage of images, sounds and music from the play. The images and sound culminate in a large, deafening explosion. The cacophony of sound trails off.

Mephistopheles

Great and wonderful things.

The following snatches of sound emerge from static.

Reporter

“... nobody has claimed responsibility for the large explosion that destroyed the main campus of the nation’s largest pharmaceutical company ...”

Reporter #2

“... claimed the lives of hundreds of people. No death toll is available at this time ...”

Reporter #3

“... nobody from Mephisto was available for comment.”

The sound trails out to silence. Faust sits in low light. A young woman, Lydia, enters.

Lydia

Dr. Faust?

Faust

What? What do you want?

Lydia

Nothing ... I ... is this a bad time?

Faust stares at her.

Lydia

I’ve wanted to meet you for awhile now. You saved my life.

Pause.

Lydia

You probably don't remember. Years ago you worked with a young couple. Genetic testing revealed that their baby had a 98% probability of developing leukemia. Without treatment, that baby would have died before the age of seven.

Pause.

Lydia

I'm that baby, Dr. Faust.

Faust

What's your name?

Lydia

Lydia. Lydia Scott. Until this Saturday, anyway. I'm getting married.

Faust

Congratulations.

Lydia

Thanks. He teaches fifth grade history. I met him at my school.

Faust

You're a teacher?

Lydia

Kindergarten. I'm sure that seems kind of mundane compared to what you do every day.

Faust

Not at all.

Lydia

I love my students. More than anything I love looking at the world through their eyes. So much hope. So many possibilities. I imagine that's how you see the world.

Faust

Yes.

Lydia

I realize that you don't know me at all, but I wanted to invite you to my wedding, Dr. Faust. I think that you, more than anyone, are responsible for it. The ceremony won't be fancy or anything. Simple. By the ocean. I hope you can come.

She hands a card to Faust.

Faust

Thank you.

She turns to go.

Lydia

I'm truly grateful, Dr. Faust. For my life.

Lydia exits. We hear the clicking of a man's dress shoes on the floor. Mephistopheles enters the light.

Faust

Is that it? Is that all?

Mephistopheles

No.

He hands Faust the large book with the double helix. Faust considers it for a moment.

Mephistopheles

It's all yours. All of it. If you want it.

Faust

What about ...?

Mephistopheles

Your soul?

He shrugs. He pulls the boutonier on his cape; it turns into a scarf.

Mephistopheles

All forms that perish other forms supply,
By turns we catch the vital breath and die
Like bubbles on the sea of matter borne,
They rise, they break, and to that sea return.

He stuffs the scarf into his fist and then releases his fist. The scarf has disappeared. They look at each other. Mephistopheles tips his hat to Faust. He crosses to the trunk, opens it, steps inside and disappears. Faust is left on stage alone.

The end.

RAW MATERIAL

While the play you just read is an entirely collaborative work, it contains characters and scenes that are derived from the work of many writers. All of these scenes have been blended together, redrafted, revised, rewritten, and reorganized. And while certain sections remain relatively intact, most scenes are merely a shadow of the original author's work. This section provides a look at how one voice contributes to the creative process. After reading the play, these scenes should have a familiar feel, although it should also be fairly apparent why the particular scene was cut or modified.

The scenes that appear at the beginning of this section were written specifically for the play. Each of these scenes are labeled with a number and assigned a draft number (ex. if this is the third rewrite of scene 6 the number is 6.3, etc.). The scenes without numbered labels were written before the play had taken shape. Many of them inspired work that came later from myself and other writers, but do not necessarily have any ties to the script in its current form. These scenes will appear toward the end of this section.

Note: The following abbreviations will appear: Faust (F), Wagner (W), Mephistopheles (M), and Nurse (N).